BIBLIOTHERAPY AND ADOLESCENTS

by

SISTER MARY VIRGIL AUGUSTINE
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Approved by:

Charles M. Reeves

Major Professor

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"Tiny fragments of eternity,
mutely ranged along an unadorned wall . . ."[1]

Who can judge the value of a book? Who can tell of the service it has rendered to the young, the old, and the in-betweens? How many have experienced a richer and fuller life because of reading? "The world of great literature is potentially a powerful teacher."[2]

This fact has been brought to the attention of Americans, and as a result various methods and techniques have been introduced to exploit the potential of reading as a tool to a better understanding of self. The value of reading has assumed immense proportions. In view of this fact the writer conducted a study with bibliotherapy in the hope of helping adolescents to acquire a deeper insight into their problems and, thereby, establish a change in attitudes which will affect their behavior for a happier, peaceful, and more productive life.

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[1]Maxine M. Gray, "Books Another Use in Our Classroom," Education, LXXIX (April, 1959), 490.

[2]Henry A. Bamman, Ursula Hogan, Charles E. Greene, Reading Instruction in the Secondary Schools. (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1961), p. 63.

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to determine whether adolescents can and do identify themselves with characters in various types of reading and as a result develop attitudes which will help them to solve their problems.

II. LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

Since it was the purpose of this investigation to aid adolescents in identifying themselves with characters portrayed in various types of reading, the writer limited the study to the work done in this area on the preventive method as applied to adolescents.

The reference materials for this study have been obtained from the Kansas-State University and Marymount College Libraries at Manhattan and Salina, Kansas, respectively.

The students have been selected from the senior class of Luckey High School, Manhattan, Kansas.

III. DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms as used in this study are defined for the purpose of clarification.

Bibliotherapy. "A process of dynamic interaction between the personality of the reader and literature--

interaction which may be utilized for personality assessment, adjustment, and growth."[3]

Reading. This term includes the study of novels and short stories.

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[3]David H. Russell and Caroline Shrodes, "Contributions of Research in Bibliotherapy to the Language Arts Program I," School Review, LVIII (September, 1950), 335.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The available literature on bibliotherapy was found to be primarily theoretical. The research in this area was limited and was largely descriptive rather than experimental. This situation may be due to the nature of the process and the intangibility of the results.

Although a survey of the literature on this subject reveals that bibliotherapy may be divided into curative and preventive techniques, the writer limits her study to the preventive methods as applied to adolescents. Studies have been done on the technique of bibliotherapy when applied to physically ill patients or to emotionally-disturbed persons.[1]

The term bibliotherapy may be somewhat misleading in that the word therapy would imply a serious illness; and, therefore, only those who are highly trained in this area encounter the task at hand.[2] Some authors are of this very opinion. However, Bailey noted: "There is nothing so obscure about the subject except as some authors make it so."[3]

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[1]Richard Darling, "Mental Hygiene and Books, Bibliotherapy As Used With Children and Adolescents," Wilson Library Bulletin, XXXII (December, 1957), 293.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Mathilda Bailey, "A Candle of Understanding," Education, LXXVI (May, 1956), 515.

I. SCOPE AND FUNCTIONS OF BIBLIOTHERAPY

Through the centuries philosophers, critics, and artists have credited the imaginative writer with an ability to understand man's motives and nature as well as a power to influence his thinking, move his heart, and change his behavior. In recent years psychologists and psychiatrists have attributed these abilities also to novelists and playwrights. The insights of both artists and scientists have been combined in the theory that there is an integral relationship between personality dynamics and the nature of vicarious experience.[4] Russell and Shrodes describe bibliotherapy as "a process of dynamic interaction between the personality of the reader and imaginative literature which may engage his emotions and free them for conscious and productive use--interaction which may be utilized for personality assessment, adjustment, and growth."[5]

Bibliotherapy, no matter how it is described in theory and in practice, remains an intangible, highly complex subject.[6] Our lack of assurance in the field of bibliotherapy is probably due to the shortage of substantial

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[4]Caroline Shrodes, "Bibliotherapy," Reading Teacher, IX (October, 1955), 24.

[5]Russell and Shrodes, loc. cit.

[6]Ruth M. Tews, (ed.), "Bibliotherapy," Library Trends, XI (October, 1962), 100.

evidence of the positive results of reading. We have much encouraging subjective testimony, but sound scientific evidence about the impact of literature is scanty. While we may be able to predict with some confidence the impact that a certain story will have on the reader, we can never predict the carry-over the reader will experience in his behavior. It may be well to stress that the process is not involved every time an adolescent has a book in his hand.[7]

At the present time studies concerning bibliotherapy include not only broad interest, continued research, and well-defined limitations but also much progress. Books are increasingly used, not simply for the practice of reading skills, but for influencing total development.[8] Three short sentences by Martin may give the keynote message to the future of bibliotherapy: "Research produces knowledge. Knowledge is needed for understanding. Understanding combined with skill leads to effective action."[9]

The impact of bibliotherapy is realized through the recognition the reader experiences in seeing himself or someone close to him in literature. The skilled author creates

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[7]Sara I. Fenwick, "Bibliotherapy--Aids in Book Selection," Reading and Inquiry, X (International Reading Association Conference Proceedings, 1965), 461.

[8]Tews, loc. cit.

[9]Lowell A. Martin, "Research in Education for Librarianship," Library Trends, VI (October, 1957), 207.

such an illusion of reality that in the words of Freud: "he is able to guide the current of our emotions, damn it up in one direction and make it flow in another."[10] The question which still remains to be answered is whether the author's meaning will be distorted and result in self-deception or whether it will be understood and contribute to insight.[11]

Reading like other human behavior is a function of the total personality. Our perception in reading is similar to the experience of working, creating, teaching, and loving because we perceive in direct proportion to our needs, goals, defenses, and values. Reading experience is similar to the primary phases of psychotherapy since it includes identification, catharsis, and insight. Because the reader will abstract from the book only that which he is able to perceive and organize, he may accept only that which satisfies his needs and reject that which is a threat to his ego, thus perceiving in the book only the meaning his present need status can assimilate.[12]

Russell and Shrodes emphasized that if the genuine values of bibliotherapy are to be effected, then the processes of identification, catharsis, and insight must be present in the interaction. First of all, the reader must be able to

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[10] Shrodes, loc. cit. [11] Ibid. [12] Ibid.

identify with another character or group; he must realize that he, too, shares such characteristics as age, sex, hopes, frustrations, and other problems of adjustment. Identification "is the real or imagined affiliation of one's self with a character or group in the story read."[13] If the reader is able to admire the character with whom he identifies himself, his self-esteem may be enhanced, his feelings of belonging increased, and his self-concept sharpened.[14]

Closely related to the process of identification is the process of catharsis through which the reader shares the conflicts, emotions, and motivations of the book character. He puts himself in the place of others, thereby coming to an understanding of their needs and aspirations as well as his own.[15] Spache differentiated the process of identification and catharsis as "catharsis goes beyond the simple intellectual recognition of commonalities as in identification or personification."[16]

The third process necessary to bibliotherapy is insight. Russell and Shrodes believe that "when the self-recognition in identification is borne out in reality, the identification represents insight--seeing one's self in the

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[13] Russell and Shrodes, op. cit., p. 336.

[14] Ibid. [15] Ibid.

[16] George D. Spache, Ph. D., Good Reading for Poor Readers (Champaign, Illinois: The Garrard Press, 1958), p. 16.

behavior of the character and thereby achieving an awareness of one's own motivations and needs."[17] Having achieved insight, the reader should then consider some course of action which may help him to solve his problem.[18] However, it was the opinion of some authorities that the actual solution of the problem, due to personality defects or other factors beyond the individual's control, is not an integral part of the process, but may be considered as a test for the effectiveness of the bibliotherapeutic process.[19]

Various writers included the opportunity to learn to know one's self better, to understand human behavior, and to find interests outside oneself in the values of bibliotherapy. Besides these personal values, bibliotherapy may aid in the socialization of the individual. Reading materials, especially in the secondary schools, may help adolescents to fulfill various needs, particularly emotional needs.[20]

Bryan believed that bibliotherapy not only aided an individual to achieve maturity but also enabled him to develop a healthy mind. This is accomplished by making the reader aware that there are various solutions to his problems, that he is not the only one to cope with them, and

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[17] Russell and Shrodes, loc. cit. [18] Ibid.

[19] Spache, op. cit., p. 17.

[20] Ibid., pp. 15-16.

that he must plan a course of action and then carry it out.[21]

The contributions of literature were summarized by Rosenblatt as follows: (1) The experience of literature helps one to develop imagination, understand the personality and needs of others, and adopt an acceptable social behavior. (2) Literature can open the individual to understand the vast number of possible ways of life and lead him to an intelligent choice. (3) It helps the individual to a better understanding of his personality and problems from an objective angle. (4) Literature may suggest means of emotional release which if undiscovered might lead to anti-social action.[22] Rosenblatt further stated that "frequently literature is the only means by which he, the reader, can discover that his own inner life reflects a common experience of others in his society."[23]

Smith and Dechant agreed that "reading can and often does have a great influence on personality; it may be used as a tool for promoting personal growth and, indeed, it has been advocated as a means of furthering personal adjustment."[24]

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[21]Alice I. Bryan, "The Psychology of the Reader," Library Journal, LXIV (January, 1939), 10-11.

[22]Louise Rosenblatt, Literature As Exploration (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), pp. 263-264.

[23]Ibid., pp. 242-243.

[24]Henry P. Smith and Emerald V. Dechant, Psychology in Teaching Reading (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961), p. 313.

Gates suggested that "In wholehearted reading activity the child does more than understand and contemplate; his emotions are stirred; his attitudes and purposes are modified; indeed, his innermost being is involved."[25]

As indicated previously, Shrodes pointed out that:

> Reading, like other human behavior, is a function of the total personality. When we read fiction or drama, no less than when we work, meet people, teach, create, or love, we perceive in accordance with our needs, goals, defenses, and values.[26]

Lind stated:

> Children get four values from reading: escape, temporary diversion; an organizing influence on personality; and certain instrumental effects. This latter refers to the value of reading as an aid to solving practical problems such as getting better grades in all school subjects.[27]

Moore agreed that reading materials carefully selected to meet the needs of the specific individual can have a therapeutic effect. He stated that:

> Reading is a two-edge sword. It cuts both ways. . . . Good reading will have on the whole good results, but it may provide every now and then not only nothing more than amusement, but even pathological principles

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[25]Arthur I. Gates, "Character and Purposes of the Yearbook," Reading in the Elementary School Forty-eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II, (University of Chicago Press, 1949), p. 4.

[26]Shrodes, loc. cit.

[27]Katherine N. Lind, "The Social Psychology of Children's Reading," American Journal of Sociology, XLI (January, 1936), 463-468.

of conduct.[28]

Bailey maintained that reading can help the child to overcome five general types of insecurity, those based on: (a) his relations with his peers; (b) his relations with his family; (c) economic factors; (d) physical factors; and (e) repeated failures.[29]

The need for freedom of choice in successful bibliotherapy was emphasized by Russell and Veatch. They felt that students must have a wide variety of reading materials available, must be able to read well, and must not be pressured by showing results or reports. Russell felt that the teacher should not recommend any particular books; however, Moore thought that teachers could play a very positive role by suggesting certain books to individuals.[30]

One must recognize the fact that there may be psychological barriers to the bibliotherapeutic process. The reader may reinforce destructive feelings without realizing the possibility of a positive solution to his problem, or he may resent the character because it is a reminder of his own conflicts. Tensions and anxieties of the reader may

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[28]Thomas V. Moore, Nature and Treatment of Mental Disorders (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1944), p. 231.

[29]Bailey, op. cit., pp. 516-519.

[30]Spache, op. cit., p. 17.

cloud the ability to perceive constructive identification.[31]

> The therapeutic process may be halted for lack of social and emotional experiences on the part of the reader. Catharsis may be impossible because the individual has had no emotional experience which prepared him for empathy with the character's feelings. Or the vagueness of his self-concept may prevent him from recognizing the resemblance and from identifying with the story character. As Russell has pointed out, the therapeutic effects of reading must be reinforced by other experiences. For example, attitudes and ideas gained from books must be supported by school and community influences, or must be appealing to some felt need of the individual.[32]

The index of success in teacher participation in bibliotherapy is the degree to which she initiates the process and brings it to fruition. The teacher must be aware of her own limitations as well as the nature of the bibliotherapeutic process and factors which inhibit its development.[33]

Bibliotherapy has its limitations and its challenges. While the teacher need not be highly trained or the child severely maladjusted, she must be aware of the effect of reading on children and possess the ability of helping children through literature to face their own problems. "Know thyself" is the key word in the process of maturation, and reading can be an excellent means of achieving this goal.[34]

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[31] Ibid. [32] Ibid. [33] Ibid., p. 18.

[34] Adolph R. Stadel, "Bibliotherapy," Ohio Schools, XLII (April, 1964), 33.

II. HISTORICAL REVIEW OF BIBLIOTHERAPY

A review of the research in bibliotherapy revealed that articles and books have been written, some with more, some with less documental proof of the writer's particular thesis about bibliotherapy. Schneck, Bradley, and Bosquet have stressed the similarities and/or dissimilarities of bibliotherapy with counseling therapy or psychotherapy. Other authors--Rosenblatt, Bryan, and Gottschalk--have devoted their speculation and research to the values and contributions of bibliotherapy, to the individual as a person, and to the individual as a member of society. Spache, Stadel, Shrodes, and Loban have devoted substantial attention to the part which the teacher and his personality play in bibliotherapy. The fact that bibliotherapy may occasionally be an adverse rather than a constructive factor in the growth and development of the person is not neglected in the literature. Several experimental studies have been made in the areas mentioned. Some of these are summarized here.

A course in group guidance was introduced to five boys whose I. Q's were in the normal or low normal range. These fifteen- and sixteen-year-old boys were having difficulty with their school courses because of poor reading ability. They met with the teacher for two and a half hour periods a week. The purposes of the group guidance were: (1) to give

the students certain ideals with regard to responsibilities of citizenship, social behavior, and occupational success; (2) to help the students make wise decisions with regard to schools and courses; (3) to teach them to investigate occupations; and (4) to help them plan for the future.[35]

Discussions and silent reading ability tests were used as directed in Occupation Course by Cromwell and Parmenter. Lessons on occupations were devised with the aid of job analyses published by the Bureau of Vocational Guidance, Connecticut Department of Education. Flashmeter work was provided to develop reading skills and independent reading was encouraged. The benefits of such a reading group were improved interest in occupational success, a tendency toward more mature thought patterns, and increased reading ability, and a tentative goal for a life occupation.[36]

The purpose of Loban's study was to probe one aspect of literature; namely, "the response of adolescent readers to stories intended to evoke sympathy."[37] His plan to study

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[35]Gladys L. Persons and Mary H. Grumbly, "Group Guidance in a Program of a Reading Laboratory," Journal of Educational Psychology, XLI (November, 1950), 409-412.

[36]Ibid., pp. 413-416.

[37]Walter Loban, "Adolescents of Varying Sensitivity and Their Responses to Literature Intended to Evoke Sympathy" (unpublished Doctor's Dissertation, The University of Minnesota, 1949), p. 67.

sympathetic insights developed from the insensitivities of people toward one another.[38]

The research was a study of two exceptional groups of adolescents, each group representing sixty adolescents, from which twelve were then chosen for special consideration. These adolescents were rated extremely high and low in their capacity for sympathy.[39]

Ten short stories were chosen from a list of 125 stories "which were alike in the poignancy of their appeal to the reader's feeling of sympathy."[40] The final choice was based upon such considerations "as the nearness of the story characters, in age, to the subjects; the combination of literary skills and emotional power; and the balance of boy and girl characters."[41] These stories were read aloud by the teachers intermittently throughout the year. After each story the students recorded four kinds of responses, ranging from a written free response to check lists and questionnaires. At the conclusion of the school year, a list of all the characters in the stories was given to the students from which they selected the two characters that they would most like to help. The purpose of this measure was to determine what kinds of characters and situations appealed to the

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[38] Ibid., p. 86.

[39] Ibid., pp. 87-88.

[40] Ibid., p. 96.

[41] Ibid.

sympathies of adolescents.[42]

The results emerging from Loban's research showed that sensitivity in adolescent girls proved significantly greater as compared with adolescent boys. Socio-economic status proved to be an important factor which affected the social sensitivity of boys but not of girls.[43] No significant difference in intelligence was found to exist between adolescents of high or low sensitivity. The most sensitive adolescents were more popular with their peers. Dr. Loban also found, in all the literary measures used, a persistent tendency to identify with literary characters most closely resembling one's self. Books dealing with idealistic, esthetic, and sympathetic themes were the popular choices for the highly sensitive adolescent, while the least sensitive adolescent chose books that emphasized cruelty.[44] The study stressed the need of adolescents for a teacher's help in discussing the causes underlying the behavior and the events in a story, thereby enabling the students to understand more fully the implications of experience.[45]

An inquiry made by Squire involved the study of the responses of four adolescent boys to a short story, Prelude by Lucille Payne, and the relation of their responses to the

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[42] Ibid., p. 98.

[43] Ibid., p. 389.

[44] Ibid., pp. 391-392.

[45] Ibid., p. 72.

average response of twenty-six boys. The story was divided into six divisions and the subjects were asked to describe their personal reactions at the end of each division. Responses were recorded on a disc cutter and later transcribed. The responses measured included both empathy and rejection of the characters in the story. The percentage of involvement for three of the boys was almost the same; however, an analysis of the six divisions showed that their identification with the different characters and situations varied greatly. One student expressed very slight involvement, showing that readers can enjoy a story without being moved to identification with characters.[46]

An experiment in reading for therapy was conducted with juniors in an American literature class by Miss Reeder at the Mattoon High School in Illinois in 1956. She conducted a survey of the students to ascertain the "book environment" of each student and the hours spent in reading as compared to TV. She then listed nine areas of living which presented problems to adolescents. From a list of classic poems and paperbacks, she led each student to find a book that would help solve his problems.[47]

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[46]James A. Squire, "Emotional Responses to a Short Story," Reading Teacher, IX (October, 1955), 30-35.

[47]Dorothy Bratton, "Reading for Therapy," English Journal, XLVI (September, 1957), 339-341.

Characters in literature and poetry presented ideals which aided the reader in developing his personality. Her purpose was to challenge her English class with some cultural background and strong motivation. For some students the excursion into realms of reading would have taken place without this added supplement. However, she concluded that the less imaginative, slower, and less mature individuals also have the right to newer worlds of meaning through literature.[48]

A representative group of ninety-six high school seniors in age, intelligence, reading comprehension, and interest patterns joined in an experimental study conducted by Meckel. These students, who were somewhat above the general population of the school, were divided into five classes of Low Twelve English. The study was an exploration and examination of the responses of adolescents to situations in a novel called Fortitude, which was selected for reading because the content bore relationship to the pre-occupations of adolescents. Although the research was concerned with reading responses to the novel in a classroom situation, the particular responses investigated represented pupil reactions

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[48] Ibid., pp. 341-346; 361.

before classroom discussion had taken place.[49]

The inquiry was centered on data concerned with situations in the novel that were remembered most vividly by the pupils, their reasons for liking or disliking certain aspects of the novel, and the personality or social-adjustment factors associated with the responses to certain situations in the novel. Since this was an investigation of reading responses and not of reading effects, various instruments were used to secure the necessary data concerning the responses to the novel and those regarding personal-social adjustment.[50]

Meckel found that pupils failed to report relatively few situations from the novel as being vividly remembered experiences. Those that were reported tended to be highly individual. The general kind of content that was most vividly remembered concerned the parent-child relationships and love relationships of the main character. He discovered that:

> Slightly over half the pupils made references to content involving peer relationships of the central characters, but only twenty per cent made reference to content involving self-to-self relationships of that character. Almost three times as many pupils referred to situations involving mastery of self as compared with situations involving rejection of self.[51]

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[49] Henry Meckel, "An Exploratory Study of Responses of Adolescent Pupils to Situations in a Novel" (unpublished Doctor's Dissertation, The University of Chicago, 1946), p. 68; 2-3.

[50] Ibid., p. 62.

[51] Ibid., p. 185.

Sex differences were apparent. Girls' interests tended more toward the characteristics of characters, while boys showed interest in events and situations as happenings, such as work, vocations, and independence of family.[52]

Meckel found that "Opportunities were more favorable for identification between central character and reader in the case of boys."[53] His analysis of reasons for liking and disliking the novel showed "the importance of reader identification with characters and situations."[54] The analysis of the free responses of the pupils revealed evidences of identification. This was evidenced in nine per cent of the boys' responses and in ten per cent of the girls' responses.[55] Meckel cited and interpreted individual responses of four pupils which proved most interesting.[56]

The data of the study revealed evidence that identification may be indirect as well as direct. This appears to have been more true of the girls who identified with female characters associated with the central male characters. Indirect identification, according to Meckel, was also expressed through severe criticism of the central character. Only sixteen per cent of the responses contained no evidence of identification. Nine of these papers were boys' and seven

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[52] Ibid. [53] Ibid., p. 186. [54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid., p. 114. [56] Ibid., pp. 119-122.

were girls'.[57]

A review of the data to test the hypothesis--there is no relationship between personality predispositions and reading responses--showed that personality predispositions were associated with differences of small groups of pupils who differed in their ratings of situations vividly remembered. However, Meckel holds that:

> While the exploration showed the presence of predispositions as a mechanism of responses, the small groups used in the exploration do not justify any generalizations about the status of these predispositions as factors in the response to particular situations in the novel.[58]

These predispositions seem to operate as various factors in the reader's response.

III. READING INTERESTS OF ADOLESCENTS

Interest is a very powerful and active force which creates a willingness to act and foster effort. It is the kinetic force which motivates our society and leads to a variety of experiments and experiences. It has a stabilizing effect upon the individual during adolescent years when enthusiasms vary from peaks of confidence to chasms of despair.[59]

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[57] Ibid., p. 114.

[58] Ibid., p. 187.

[59] Ruth Strang, "Scope of Adolescent Interests," Education, LXXXIII (April, 1963), 463.

Adolescent behavior is not only the cause of the student's reading interest, but it is often a result of it. He is greatly affected by his experiences with reading, and often this relation will influence his own behavior. His interests may direct him toward scholastic fulfillment or move him into less desirable delinquent behavior.[60]

Many studies have been made and polls taken to ascertain what factors determine the interests of children, adolescents, and adults. All of these studies, even one made as long ago as 1897, when H. C. Henderson conducted the first nationwide survey, indicate that the age and sex of the reader are the most prominent factors in generating interest. Later surveys, made by Lou Bryant, Paul Witty, Ruth Strang, Constance McCullough, William Eberhardt, Gertrude Hildredth, and William Brink, support Henderson's findings that age and sex are the dominant factors in influencing literary selections.[61]

A very comprehensive study of reading habits made by Norvell, indicate that there is a marked difference in the reading habits of pre-adolescent and adolescent boys and girls. Boys select material that is adventuresome and action-

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[60] Ibid.

[61] Geneva R. Hanna and Marianna K. McAllister, Books, Young People, and Reading Guidance (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), pp. 41-42.

packed, while girls read books and stories that are sentimental and romantic. Interestingly, girls will often read a boys' book, but boys rarely read or enjoy a girls' book. During late adolescence, girls still retain their romantic literary approach, but boys start to select articles that are factual, such as a news article or magazine report. These traits even carry over into adulthood, where women read non-violent, sentimental books, and men read biographies and news stories.[62]

Age has a great influence on reading habits. The change in reading habits is gradual with age, but unavoidable. Generally, books written for twelve-year-olds will not appeal to persons in their later teens, nor will books written for readers in their later teens appeal to readers twelve years old. There are relatively few works that have an age range sufficiently wide to prove enjoyable to both young and old readers.[63]

The independent studies of Huber, Thorndike, Terman, Lima, and Norvell have shown that intelligence also has a tremendous effect on reading interests and habits. The rate at which a student passes through the various stages of reading will either be accelerated or slowed down according to intelligence. A very intelligent child, the same age as

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[62] Ibid., pp. 43-44.

[63] Ibid., p. 44.

an average child, will pass through the same interest cycle as the average student, but he will progress rapidly. Thus in a gifted child, instructors should look for an accelerated reading interest level, not a different one. In consequence, a brilliant child may read books written for high school students and a less intelligent child of the same age will select books written for eight-to ten-year-olds.[64]

In 1955 Robinson released her findings in student reading interest. Her findings substantiated what has already been said. In her summary she concluded that: (1) boys' and girls' interests change at the middle grade levels of adolescence; (2) young boys lean toward lighter materials--comics, mysteries, and sport stories; (3) young girls prefer romance and problems regarding teens and begin to read more mature books and fiction than do boys; (4) boys especially turn toward science; and (5) interests of slower or mentally retarded children are similar to those of quicker students of their own age, though of course their books are not as difficult. Finally, Robinson agrees with other researchers when she reports that her findings indicate that age requires more complex material.[65]

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[64] Ibid., p. 45.

[65] Helen M. Robinson, "Reading Interests," The Reading Teacher, VIII (February, 1955), 173-177.

A survey made jointly by the United States Department of Education and Northwestern University likewise contained some surprising facts. Although movies and television influence reading habits greatly, the average pupil spends one hour and twenty minutes per day in reading. The survey, piloted by Witty, also showed that the reading interests of boys and girls are much alike, but the order of their preference is reversed. Girls place fiction above factual material such as newspapers and magazines, while boys rate them just the opposite. Neither sex shows much interest in essays, poetry, or plays, although girls show a higher preference for such literature than boys. Sex plays a pronounced part in choice. Boys prefer action and adventure, such as science fiction. Girls tend toward humor, romance, and careers. Boys seem to have a broader range of interests. As far as nonfiction is concerned, boys tend toward travel and space as well as famous people, while girls like famous people, careers, and stories of foreign peoples.[66]

These studies, substantiated by more recent research, have made possible the establishment of the following general information:

1. The reading interests of boys and girls differ significantly.

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[66]Paul Witty, "A Study of Pupil Interests," Education, LXXXII (September, 1961), 100-107.

2. The reading interests of bright, average, and below average young people tend to be much the same, although the selections they read to satisfy these interests may be different.

3. Reading interests change little geographically or historically.

4. Young people read primarily for content rather than for style or literary quality.

5. Reading interests follow predictable patterns through adolescence.

6. Young readers get as much from the rapid reading of a selection as they do from a long and detailed study of it.

7. The traditional way of teaching literature has not succeeded in producing adults who are active readers.[67]

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[67]Paul Farmer, "Literature Goals, Myth or Reality?" English Journal, LVI (March, 1967), 459.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

I. SAMPLING

The most effective teaching is accomplished by the instructor who has an overall idea of the problems of those with whom he is working and is acquainted with some of the difficulties he must overcome which will confront him in his teaching. A teacher who is quite sure that a student's attention-getting behavior results from his need for affection will invariably be more sympathetic, more understanding, and more stimulating.

Daily teachers interpret, form judgments, and make decisions concerning his students. The wide range of student ability, interest, and motivation in today's classrooms demand that teachers give as much attention as possible to the study of individuals. It is highly desirable that teachers learn to study individuals systematically with an unbiased attitude. However, they must not usurp the functions of the guidance worker in order to study certain individual students.

Educators recognize the fact that every learner is unique in many ways. Students of all ages go through a series of rather common developmental tasks, but all do not progress at the same rate. Some will vary greatly from

their class peers in mental ability, physical development, and social participation. Research can be the key to understanding.

The sampling for the present study was selected from the senior class of Luckey High School, Manhattan, Kansas. Luckey High School, a Catholic parochial school, had an enrollment of one hundred fifty-five students. The faculty was composed of a Superintendent, a Principal, a Counselor, six Sisters, and six lay faculty. A school with Standard accreditation by the State Department of Education, it has served the Manhattan area for sixty years. Luckey High School, formerly known as the Sacred Heart Academy, has the distinction of being the oldest high school in the area.

The boys were selected with the hope of aiding them to acquire a deeper insight into their problems, and by furthering a change of attitude affect their behavior and satisfy their emotional needs. Table I contains information relevant to the eight students. Age, intelligence and achievement scores of each student as well as the fathers' occupations are incorporated within the Table. These items were secured from the school records, the availability of which proved both profitable and beneficial.

The eight individuals described in the following pages incorporate the findings of previous teachers as well as those of the writer. These student descriptions are intended

TABLE I

DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

Name	Age	Intelligence test Yr.	Test	I.Q.	Achievement test 1966-	Pctle.	Father's occupation
1. Tom	17	'62	Otis-Beta Em	126	Nat. Ed. Dev.	99	Post Engineer
2. Pete	17	'62	" " "	103	" " "	36	Draftsman
3. Tim	18	'62	" " "	112	" " "	84	Fireman
4. Nick	17	'62	" " "	105	" " "	69	Telephone Switchman
5. Joe	17	'62	" " "	97	" " "	82	Farmer
6. Alex	17	'62	" " "	118	" " "	82	Carpenter
7. Paul	17	'62	" " "	115	" " "	88	Rural Mail Carrier
8. Dick	17	'63	Otis-Beta Cm	128	" " "	94	General Contractor

to reveal some of the personal and/or social qualities of each boy.

Description of Students

A thin, hollow-cheeked young man is Tom. Quiet and constantly searching, he proceeds to delve deeply into the times in which he lives. Tom excels in expressing himself both verbally and in writing, has an excellent vocabulary at his command, and possesses much potential; but he is not open to the ideas of others. A questioning and probing mind make him the type of student a teacher enjoys having in class--argument is his specialty. Beneath the often defensive surface he portrays, lies a generous heart and a spirit willing to help and lend a hand to those who are his friends. His home life is not conducive to a good normal life. Perhaps his defensiveness and highly opinionated arguments are to cover up hurt feelings.

Pete is a student who is easily influenced by others. He is concerned about what others think of him. On the other hand, he is very well-liked by his peers. His parents have little or no control over him because he runs free at his own will and is his own boss. Being rather quiet and reserved in large groups, he appears introverted; but he is usually eager to participate in an intimate one. He excels in sports, especially football and basketball. His testing scores indicate that he has an average intelligence, but is

definitely an underachiever, due to a lack of good training in his earlier years.

Tim is seventeen and a member of a very close family. An older brother is in the army and three younger sisters are in the grade school. Tim progressed through eleven years of school without any significant accomplishments. He is a sensitive student with literary talents which have never been developed. A deep thinker, he is very hesitant about expressing himself; however, he often participates actively in class discussions, and always has a logical opinion which is not influenced easily by others. He is well-balanced, humble but not meek, and independent in his actions. He is considerate and cooperative once you have won his confidence. He does not seek leadership but does his best when responsibility is placed upon him. He seems to have a sense of "help-support-family" responsibility which causes him to take his after-school job most seriously, even in preference to extra-class activities. He preserves a facial expression that is highly unresponsive and betrays no feelings.

Carefree and happy-go-lucky best describe Nick. Although he is generally accepted and liked by his peers, he does not have many close friends. He can produce thought-provoking ideas, but lacks motivation. He doesn't seem to have much confidence in himself or much initiative; but he does have much untapped potential. Nick's lack of self-

confidence is concealed under a cocky exterior. At times he defies authority; he does not like school; and he considers religion a farce. However, at the same time, he is usually quiet and respectful in the classroom and responds wholeheartedly when once his confidence is gained.

Outwardly quiet and reserved, Joe is a complex person. He is an average student with a great desire to be an individual. His peers consider him as such because he has his own dress code and hair style and is at times defiant to some authority. For all his apparent uneasiness, he is a searcher for truth but makes sure that his peers do not know of this. He appears emotionless but is pleased when attention passes his way. His need for love, affection, and for acceptance by his peers accounts for his disinterested attitude. The potential to succeed is not lacking; he accepts responsibility when challenged. He could be a very good student, especially at reasoning, but he does not always try. He is hard to get to know because he often argues opposite to what he believes just to avoid being known. His friends regard his careless, apathetic exterior as proof that this young person is what he desires to be, i. e., an individual.

Because Alex is an extremely quiet person, he speaks only when spoken to. Although he is a very good student, he lacks self-confidence and needs to be encouraged to participate in class more openly. He comes from a large and

religious family which is dominated largely by his mother. Alex, himself, is a religious person. He is somewhat slow in his actions, has few very close friends, and is definitely a follower. His classmates tease him a great deal, but he always responds with a smile. In spite of the fact that he is a good student, he needs much encouragement, probably because of the dominating mother.

Paul is a student with a lot of ability and much influence over his classmates. He is sometimes defiant toward authority, and can be disrespectful; but much of this stems from a sense of humor that is hard to understand. He likes to make people laugh and is usually successful. He is inclined to be egotistical, stubborn, and conceited. He is known as a "ladies' man." Although he is a good athlete, he is not always cooperative with the team and coach. Paul comes from a good family, but he does not show as much respect toward them as he might. A lack of parental control offers him an opportunity to do as he wills.

An extremely skeptical student who is afraid to trust anyone, Dick is a tall, handsome lad. Although sincerely seeking answers to questions about life, he is not open to the ideas of all. He believes only what he wants to believe, as he considers his ideas self-sufficient. At least, this is the impression he gives. He has the potential to be an excellent student; he is intelligent, self-confident, and ambitious, but he is unwilling to put forth his greatest

efforts and pursues only those things which interest him personally. At times he seems unwilling to undertake certain given assignments, preferring to read according to his own tastes. He is a sensitive boy, and he has very promising artistic ability. He comes from an excellent, above-middle class family, but his parents do not have much control over him. He is extremely independent, but he is puzzled about what God is and troubled over religion.

II. MEASURING DEVICES

A wide diversity of reading interests develops among adolescents as they mature. Although young people and their interests do not change sharply from year to year, educators should keep pace with them. At this time the writer was not aware of any commercially published test; thus a teacher-made test was designed to give an insight into the students' reading interests in regard to the types of reading. The Reading Interest Inventory Test Results, Tables II and III, disclose the reading interests of the boys ranging from the "All-Time Favorite Book" to the "Most Disliked Book."

Sociometric methods are techniques used for evaluating a student's social status among his peers. They are a simple means of studying the interpersonal relationships among students. Because the classroom provides a social situation as well as a learning situation, the students' ability to

function in a class is affected by his status in the classroom. His self-image is dependent upon his acceptance by his peers. Figures 1 through 6 chart the stars and isolates as well as the subgroups within the entire group. Insights regarding the feelings of the class members toward each other unveil the individual student's acceptance or rejection by his peers. It provided clues to a better understanding of the social needs of the students. This test was also a teacher-made test.

TABLE II

READING INTEREST INVENTORY RESULTS (SEPTEMBER, 1967)

Student	Reading for enjoyment	Books read during the past year	Criteria for book selection
1. Tom	Yes	1. Valley of the Dolls 2. The Prize 3. The Man 4. Of Mice and Men	By the best-seller list and/or required or recommended lists.
2. Pete	No	1. Catcher in the Rye 2. Babe Ruth 3. Tuffy Tyler 4. Huckleberry Finn	Look at the title to see if it sounds interesting.
3. Tim	Some	1. Moonraker 2. Casino Royale 3. Red Alert 4. The Crisis	I pick a subject that I am interested in at the time.
4. Nick	Yes	1. Once Upon a Time 2. Call of the Wild 3. Sundown 4. Catcher in the Rye	Mostly by what I hear about them.
5. Joe	No	1. Catcher in the Rye (started it) 2. Up the Down Staircase 3. Animal Farm 4. Life is a Comedy	A title that catches my eyes.
6. Alex	Yes	1. For Whom the Bell Tolls 2. Black Like Me 3. Red Badge of Courage 4. Brave New World	By the title or by what I've heard about it.
7. Paul	No	1. Gone With the Wind 2. The Day Lincoln Was Shot 3. Red Badge of Courage 4. John Wilkes Booth	Find one that is interesting or ask someone who has read it.
8. Dick	Some	1. Franny and Zooey 2. Nine Short Stories 3. Raise High Roof Beams, Carpenters, and Seymor	Read the first page.

TABLE II (continued)

Student	Favorite choice	Reason for the choice
1. Tom	The Prize	Because it deals with reality.
2. Pete	Catcher in the Rye	It was interesting; it reminded me of myself sometimes.
3. Tim	Red Alert	It presented a picture of what would happen if the world was suddenly plunged into nuclear war.
4. Nick	Sundown	It was a combination of what I like to read.
5. Joe	Catcher in the Rye	It told about a fellow who did what he wanted to do.
6. Alex	For Whom the Bell Tolls	It was about war and war is very realistic.
7. Paul	Gone With the Wind	It was interesting.
8. Dick	Nine Short Stories -Banana Fish	I don't know--it was Seymor's suicide, I guess--he was so tired of life.

TABLE II (continued)

Choice according to types of books preferred		
Tom--		
___1. Biography	___ 6. Careers	___11. Technical
___2. Sports	___ 7. Animals	___12. Comics
_2_ 3. Poetry	_3_ 8. Science Fiction	___13. Religious
___4. Romance	___ 9. Historical	___14. Travel
___5. Mystery	_1_ 10. Classical Fiction	
Pete--		
___1. Biography	___ 6. Careers	___11. Technical
_2_ 2. Sports	___ 7. Animals	_1_ 12. Comics
___3. Poetry	___ 8. Science Fiction	___13. Religious
___4. Romance	___ 9. Historical	___14. Travel
___5. Mystery	_3_ 10. Classical Fiction	
Tim--		
_1_ 1. Biography	___ 6. Careers	___11. Technical
___2. Sports	___ 7. Animals	___12. Comics
___3. Poetry	_3_ 8. Science Fiction	___13. Religious
___4. Romance	___ 9. Historical	___14. Travel
___5. Mystery	_2_ 10. Classical Fiction	
Nick--		
___1. Biography	___ 6. Careers	___11. Technical
___2. Sports	_3_ 7. Animals	_1_ 12. Comics
___3. Poetry	___ 8. Science Fiction	___13. Religious
___4. Romance	___ 9. Historical	_2_ 14. Travel
___5. Mystery	___10. Classical Fiction	

TABLE II (continued)

Choice according to types of books preferred		
Joe--		
___1. Biography	___ 6. Careers	___11. Technical
2 2. Sports	___ 7. Animals	1 12. Comics
___3. Poetry	___ 8. Science Fiction	___13. Religious
___4. Romance	___ 9. Historical	___14. Travel
3 5. Mystery	___10. Classical Fiction	
Alex--		
___1. Biography	___ 6. Careers	___11. Technical
3 2. Sports	___ 7. Animals	___12. Comics
___3. Poetry	___ 8. Science Fiction	___13. Religious
___4. Romance	2 9. Historical	___14. Travel
1 5. Mystery	___10. Classical Fiction	
Paul--		
___1. Biography	___ 6. Careers	___11. Technical
2 2. Sports	___ 7. Animals	___12. Comics
___3. Poetry	___ 8. Science Fiction	___13. Religious
3 4. Romance	1 9. Historical	___14. Travel
___5. Mystery	___10. Classical Fiction	
Dick--		
___1. Biography	___ 6. Careers	___11. Technical
___2. Sports	___ 7. Animals	___12. Comics
1 3. Poetry	___ 8. Science Fiction	___13. Religious
___4. Romance	___ 9. Historical	___14. Travel
___5. Mystery	1 10. Classical Fiction	

TABLE II (continued)

Student	Degree of reading enjoyment			Reason
	Greatly	Moderately	Not at all	
1. Tom	X			Because it occupies time and stimulates thought.
2. Pete		X		I like to read short stories, newspapers, and magazines, but not books.
3. Tim		X		I seldom have time to sit down and read a book.
4. Nick		X		I don't like to read all the time.
5. Joe		X		Sometimes I get the urge, but not often.
6. Alex		X		Only a few books do I enjoy greatly.
7. Paul		X		I don't have the time for it.
8. Dick			Definitely	I don't enjoy a book unless I like the author's concept of life--I like J. D. Salinger.

TABLE II (continued)

Student	All-time favorite book	Reason for the choice
1. Tom	Rise of Silas Lapham	It is the first realistic book and one of the more meaningful ones I've read.
2. Pete	Catcher in the Rye	I like it.
3. Tim	The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich	I am especially interested in history.
4. Nick	Sundown	I don't know; I just liked the book and the characters.
5. Joe	Animal Farm	It interested me all the way through.
6. Alex	For Whom the Bell Tolls	Very interesting and realistic.
7. Paul	Catcher in the Rye	Because Holden Caulfield is a lot like me.
8. Dick	Nine Short Stories	No response.

TABLE II (continued)

Student	Most disliked book	Reason for dislike
1. Tom	I haven't read any book that I actually disliked because I usually study them carefully before selecting them.	No response.
2. Pete	Almost all of them.	I don't care to read.
3. Tim	Twenty-Thousand Leagues Under the Sea	The plot moved too slowly.
4. Nick	Black Like Me	Because everybody felt sorry for Griffith. He did this on his own; nobody forced him to do such a thing.
5. Joe	The Story of Scotland Yard	I was told to read it; it was all facts. It just bored me.
6. Alex	House of Seven Gables	No excitement in it.
7. Paul	I dislike all my school books with the possible exception of Business Law.	They are very boring and don't fill me with enthusiasm to learn.
8. Dick	The Bible	Because I was forced to read it when I could have been outside playing.

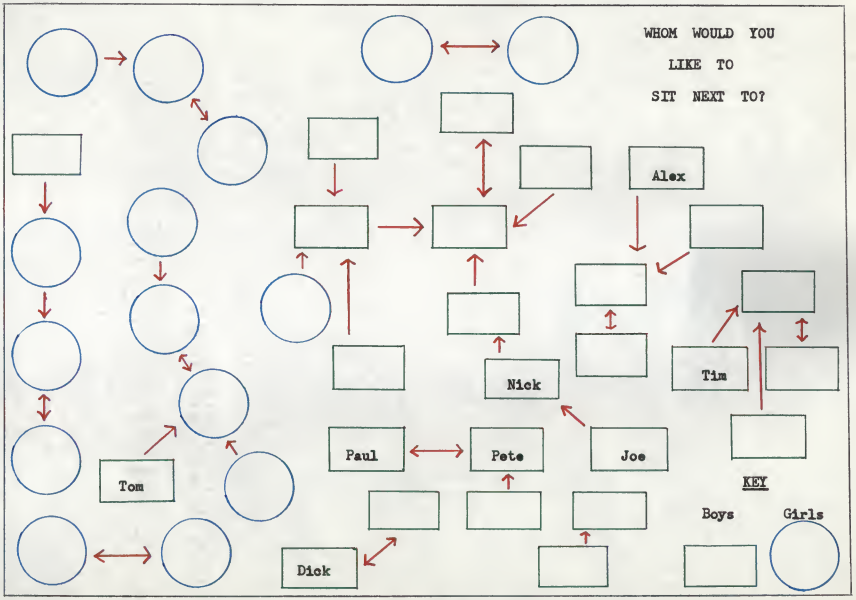

FIGURE 1 (September, 1967)

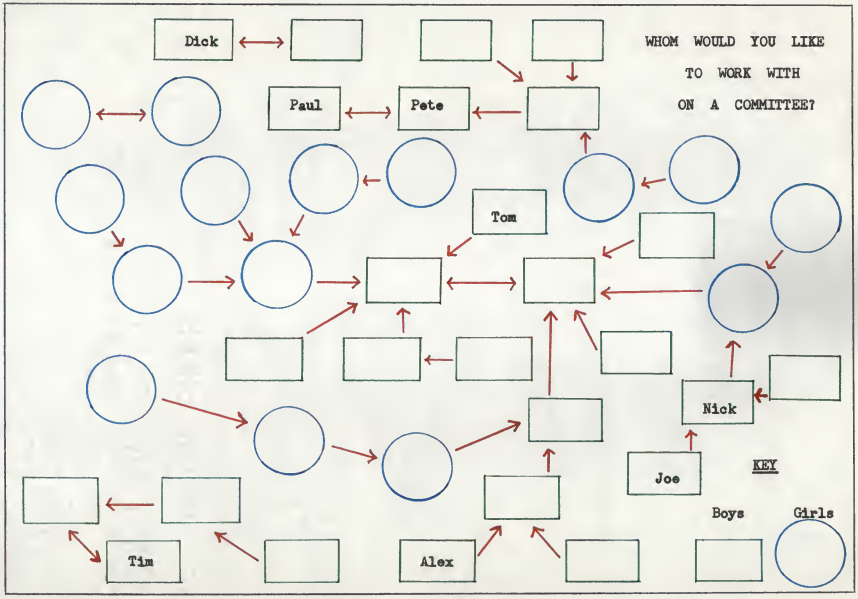

FIGURE 2 (September, 1967)

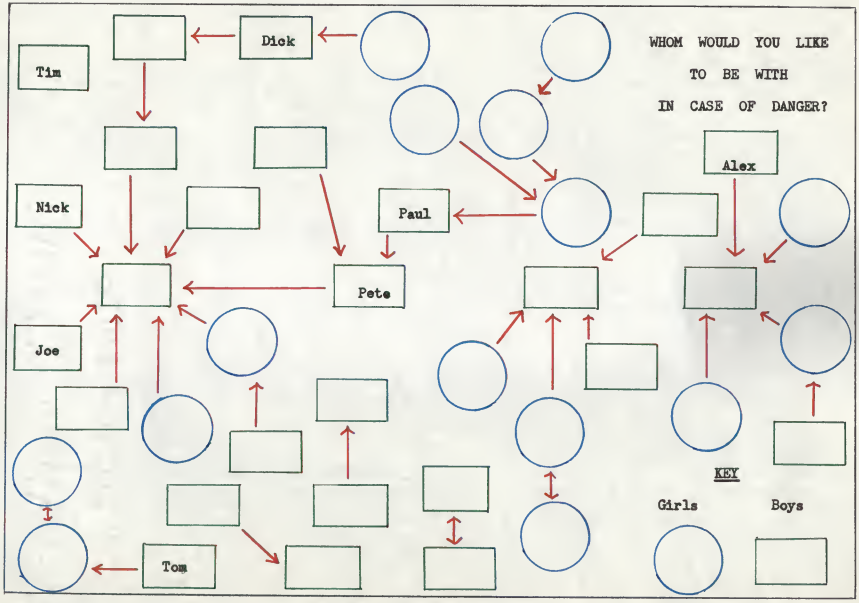

FIGURE 3 (September, 1967)

TABLE III

READING INTEREST INVENTORY RESULTS (MARCH, 1968)

Student	Reading for enjoyment	Books read during the past year	Criteria for book selection
1. Tom	Yes	1. Rise of Silas Lapham 2. Wuthering Heights 3. Ethan Frome 4. Nine Short Stories	By reading and the best-seller list.
2. Pete	No	1. Human Comedy 2. 1984 3. Tale of Two Cities 4. To Sir With Love	I am told by the teacher. One that is not too difficult.
3. Tim	No	1. Human Comedy 2. 1984 3. Mein Kampf 4. Brave New World	One that has a fast moving plot, few characters, and a surprise ending.
4. Nick	Yes	1. Vanity Fair 2. UFO's Serious Business 3. UFO's Are For Real 4. Valley of the Dolls	Interests.
5. Joe	No	1. Nine Short Stories 2. Hell's Angels 3. Cry of the Beloved Country 4. Catcher in the Rye	Sometimes I'm told to read it or a friend will suggest it.
6. Alex	Yes	1. Gulliver's Travels 2. Durango Street 3. Wuthering Heights 4. To Kill A Mockingbird	By its popularity, usually.
7. Paul	No	1. Grapes of Wrath 2. In Cold Blood 3. Hidden Persuaders 4. Wuthering Heights	If other people say that it is good.
8. Dick	No	1. 1984 2. Animal Farm 3. Wuthering Heights 4. Poe's Greatest Works	By the author.

TABLE III (continued)

Student	Favorite choice	Reason for the choice
1. Tom	Wuthering Heights	Because it had an intricate plot; the characters were realistic.
2. Pete	To Sir With Love	It was the most interesting and the easiest to read.
3. Tim	1984	It was more interesting than the rest of them.
4. Nick	Valley of the Dolls	Because it presents some cold facts as to what a person has to go through to keep his image alive.
5. Joe	Hell's Angels	It presented the real truth and it kept me interested.
6. Alex	Durango Street	The main character was about my age. There was plenty of action in it.
7. Paul	In Cold Blood	It was much more interesting than the other two.
8. Dick	Poe's Greatest Works	I like Poe's style and his rare trend of thought.

TABLE III (continued)

Choice according to types of books preferred		
Tom--		
___1. Biography	___ 6. Careers	___11. Technical
___2. Sports	___ 7. Animals	___12. Comics
2 3. Poetry	___ 8. Science Fiction	___13. Religious
___4. Romance	___ 9. Historical	___14. Travel
___5. Mystery	1 10. Classical Fiction	
Pete--		
3 1. Biography	___ 6. Careers	___11. Technical
2 2. Sports	___ 7. Animals	1 12. Comics
___3. Poetry	___ 8. Science Fiction	___13. Religious
___4. Romance	___ 9. Historical	___14. Travel
___5. Mystery	___10. Classical Fiction	
Tim--		
___1. Biography	___ 6. Careers	___11. Technical
___2. Sports	___ 7. Animals	___12. Comics
___3. Poetry	3 8. Science Fiction	___13. Religious
___4. Romance	2 9. Historical	___14. Travel
___5. Mystery	1 10. Classical Fiction	
Nick--		
___1. Biography	___ 6. Careers	1 11. Technical
___2. Sports	___ 7. Animals	___12. Comics
3 3. Poetry	___ 8. Science Fiction	___13. Religious
___4. Romance	___ 9. Historical	___14. Travel
___5. Mystery	2 10. Classical Fiction	

TABLE III (continued)

Choice according to types of books preferred		
Joe--		
___1. Biography	___ 6. Careers	___11. Technical
___2. Sports	___ 7. Animals	___12. Comics
3 3. Poetry	___ 8. Science Fiction	___13. Religious
___4. Romance	___ 9. Historical	___14. Travel
2 5. Mystery	1 10. Classical Fiction	
Alex--		
___1. Biography	___ 6. Careers	___11. Technical
___2. Sports	___ 7. Animals	___12. Comics
___3. Poetry	___ 8. Science Fiction	___13. Religious
___4. Romance	2 9. Historical	___14. Travel
3 5. Mystery	1 10. Classical Fiction	
Paul--		
2 1. Biography	___ 6. Careers	___11. Technical
___2. Sports	___ 7. Animals	___12. Comics
___3. Poetry	___ 8. Science Fiction	___13. Religious
___4. Romance	___ 9. Historical	3 14. Travel
___5. Mystery	1 10. Classical Fiction	
Dick--		
___1. Biography	___ 6. Careers	___11. Technical
___2. Sports	___ 7. Animals	___12. Comics
1 3. Poetry	___ 8. Science Fiction	___13. Religious
___4. Romance	___ 9. Historical	___14. Travel
___5. Mystery	___10. Classical Fiction	

TABLE III (continued)

Student	Degree of reading enjoyment			Reason
	Greatly	Moderately	Not at all	
1. Tom	X			Because it offers an escape for the moment from reality.
2. Pete			X	I would rather do something else.
3. Tim		X		I like to read when I have the time, and this isn't often.
4. Nick		X		Because you can learn facts about some interesting topics.
5. Joe		X		Usually I don't find the time and I usually can't find a book that keeps me interested.
6. Alex		X		I enjoy reading, but I like to do other things in my leisure time.
7. Paul		X		There are more stimulating things to do than to read.
8. Dick			X	Most stories are meaningless to say the least.

TABLE III (continued)

Student	All-time favorite book	Reason for the choice
1. Tom	Silas Marner	Because of the tragedy and the credibility of the book.
2. Pete	1984	It was a good book that made me think much.
3. Tim	I don't really have an all-time favorite.	No response.
4. Nick	UFO's Serious Business	Because its facts are overwhelming as to the existence of other beings besides ourselves.
5. Joe	Hell's Angels	It really turned me on.
6. Alex	For Whom The Bell Tolls	Interesting characters.
7. Paul	Catcher In The Rye	I felt like Holden Caulfield.
8. Dick	Nine Short Stories	Because they really made me think.

TABLE III (continued)

Student	Most disliked book	Reason for dislike
1. Tom	Lord Jim	Because of the lengthy prose style and form of revealing background that the author uses.
2. Pete	Tale of Two Cities	It was hard and long.
3. Tim	No response	No response.
4. Nick	Vanity Fair	They are the unreal in the ideals of my thoughts.
5. Joe	Cry of the Beloved Country	It was boring.
6. Alex	House of Seven Gables	Too dull.
7. Paul	Hidden Persuaders	Too boring and too many statistics.
8. Dick	Most all books reveal only average and common ideas.	Because most authors are so narrow minded.

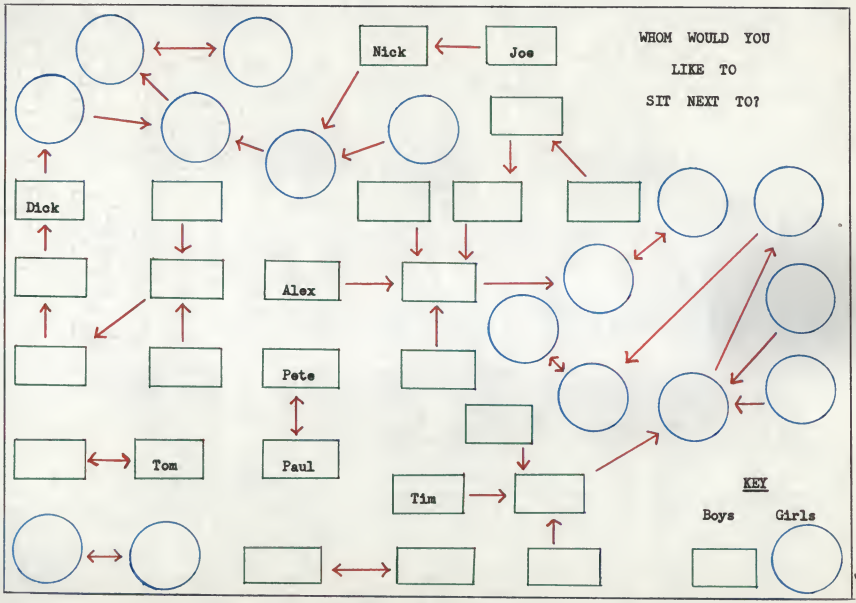

FIGURE 4 (March, 1968)

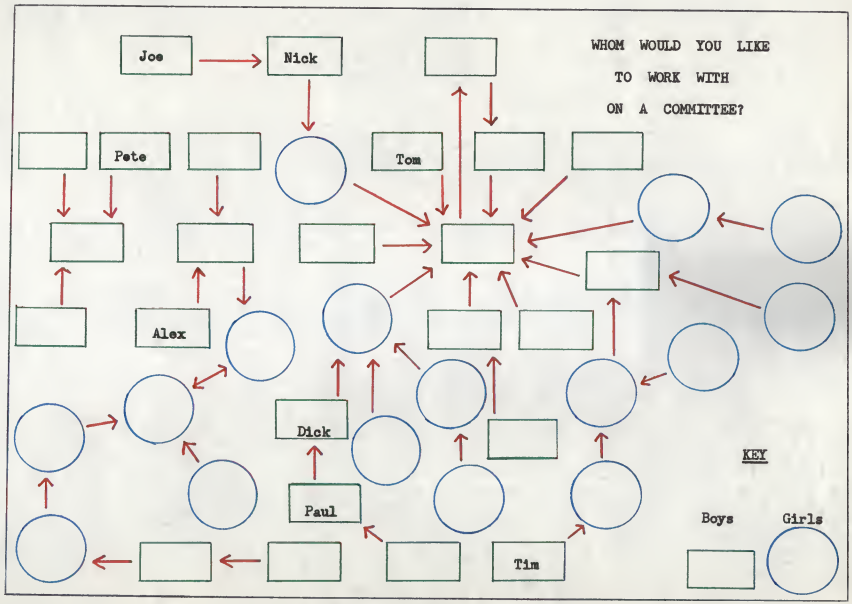

FIGURE 5 (March, 1968)

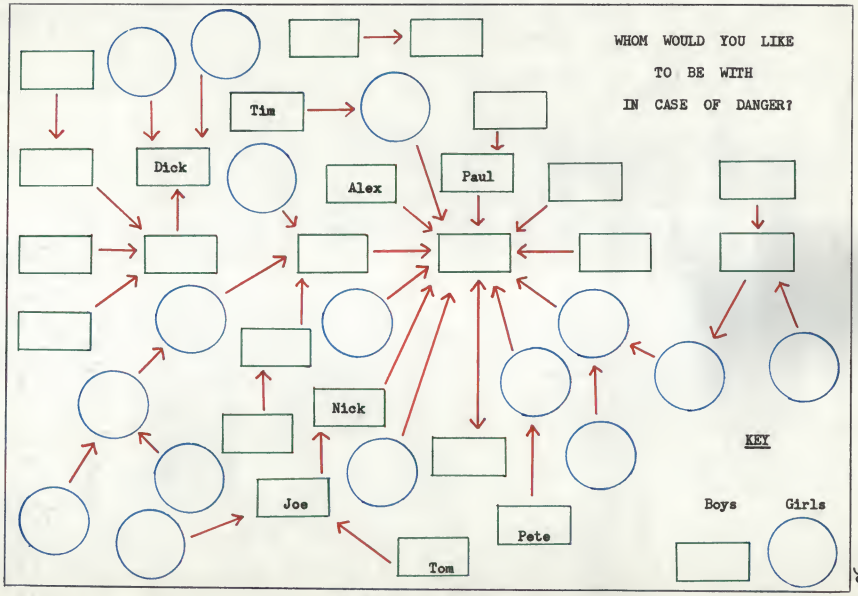

FIGURE 6 (March, 1968)

III. PROCEDURE

The procedure for this single-group experimental research on bibliotherapy was conducted for a period of twenty-six weeks beginning in September and terminating in March. The Reading Interest Inventory Test was given in September before the study commenced and again after the study to determine whether reading interests would change. The Sociometric Test was given in September to determine the real leaders of the group as well as the isolates. Another one was administered in March following the study to note any changes in inter-relationships.

During the experimental period students read various materials--some assigned and others self-chosen. Techniques for securing the desired information included the following:

1. An anecdotal record was kept for each of the boys, noticing attitudes in behavior.
2. A bulletin board display with an annotated bibliography to encourage reading was arranged. A record was kept showing whether or not students chose books which portrayed characters with similar problems.
3. During the free reading periods various books were made available to the students. Some of these books depicted problems of the various individuals. An observation record of their

selections was kept.

4. Varied methods for book reports were required:
   a. Written reports were submitted with emphasis on the problems of the characters as related to modern-day problems of teenagers.
   b. An optional oral discussion of the book with the teacher in a private interview provided a second method.
   c. Students participated in informal discussions in a group of their choice.
5. Panel discussions proved interesting. Groups of five or six were assigned to read a book and then in turn prepared the discussion for the class.

At the close of the study the students were asked to write or indicate in some way which novels or short stories changed their thinking, attitudes, and/or behavior. If no influence was effected, then they were asked to indicate this.

CHAPTER IV

REPORT OF FINDINGS

The results of the evaluative techniques used for this study and described in Chapter III indicate no significant influence on the eight boys used as the sample. Written book reviews, oral discussions, private interviews, informal group discussions in a group of the student's choice, and panel discussions emphasized the problems of the characters as related to modern-day teenage dilemmas. As a follow-up the students indicated how their readings influenced their attitudes and/or behavior.

As a technique the use of the bulletin board was probably the least effective procedure. The bulletin board on which an annotated bibliography was arranged had some influence in the choice of reading materials of these eight boys; however, they were also influenced to some extent by the suggestions of the writer. Of the eight boys, four read one book each; and one read two. Three of the five boys identified with characters portrayed in the following books: Ethan Frome, The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit, The Special Year, and Hot Rod.

Carefree and happy-go-lucky Nick recognized himself in Bud (Hot Rod): "Independence, self-reliance, speed, danger, and hot rods pretty well cover my gears to. . . . Mistakes

happen but you live with them and learn from them as Bud did." "Generally," wrote Paul, "Scott (Special Year) and I had more things different than we had in common. Mainly, I feel I am much wilder and fun-loving than Scott. I get a big kick out of doing different things for excitement." Another boy, Tim, who is quiet and serious, was sympathetic to Tom Rath's (The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit) problem of not knowing "exactly what he wanted or how to get it."

More frequent use of the free reading period, in the opinion of the writer, would have afforded the students an opportunity to sample a variety of types of readings in preparation for the assigned book reviews. Three of the boys of this sampling group, who read Human Comedy, Good-by, Mr. Chips, and God Is My Co-Pilot, commented as follows: Alex, extremely reserved, observed, "I can't really identify with Robert Scott (God Is My Co-Pilot). . . . He seems to enjoy fighting and destroying the enemy;" but sensitive Tim saw a bit of himself in Homer (Human Comedy): "Homer was a messenger; his older brother was in the service, and therefore he was forced to assume additional responsibilities. I am a paperboy; my older brother is in the service, and I find that I have additional responsibilities. I agreed entirely with Homer's outlook on life . . . his deep love for his family." Nick, who read Good-by, Mr. Chips, but failed to identify with any of the characters, did express his

admiration fittingly for the school master: "With his fond memories of his life to be kept alive by his large family, Mr. Chips could sleep a most restful sleep."

These students, however, in their reading, did recognize the common problems of youth. Introspective Alex accepted wholeheartedly Johnny's (Second Chance) preference for cultivating values rather than the choice of making of money a life goal. The treatment of Prince Myshkin (The Idiot) exemplified the theme of "Man's inhumanity to man" wrote studious and self-sufficient Dick. Independent Pete saw Huckleberry Finn as an illustration of the theme adventure versus conformity. After reading Durango Street, Alex saw the need for help and counseling for the underprivileged slum area youngsters.

On the other hand, three of the students, influential Paul, individualist Joe, and Pete agreed to the theme disillusionment with adults as depicted in The Catcher in the Rye. Recognizing this same theme in 1984, Tim wrote, "Some very good points about totalitarian governments are brought out in this book and also a startling look at possible results of today's trends."

An investigation of identification in the short story genre revealed that the group as a whole identified more successfully than in that of the novels. The Nine Short Stories, J. D. Salinger, exerted a tremendous influence on three of the boys. "I also feel a greater desire to help

others since reading this story ("Just Before the War With the Eskimos"), wrote Tom. Dick reported, "I find myself in sympathy with Teddy ("Teddy") concerning his idea of emotional love. . . ." Joe identified with Esme ("For Esme With Love and Squalor"): "I can say that I have friends that have given this much satisfaction at times in my life when I really needed this lift just like the man in the story did."

Other short stories also provided identification. Nick commented, ("Among the Dahlias") "I keep trying to make excuses for my actions when in a spot. Leaving myself in a stew of boiling water with the scars deep in my mind." "Parsley Garden" provided Dick the chance to identify with Al: "I found myself to a minor degree in the way Al went into solitude, weighed the various aspects precarious . . . to what his ultimate decision would be and then made an honest decision." Joe reveals a characteristic human trait in identifying with the captain in the "Secret Sharer" when he says, "The captain was trying to be kind and helpful and I'm like that part of the time depending on who needs the help. . . . This is why I'm so mean part of the time." Nick commenting on the same story wrote, "As the captain . . . although I know what a person has done wrong, [I] . . . try to help because if they were anything like me, I feel a break would be welcomed."

The reaction of the students to the question of the

influence of their reading on their attitudes and/or behavior indicated that generally their attitudes were strengthened rather than changed. Six of the eight boys reported a strengthening of present attitudes, and two took a neutral stand. Paul found identification with Holden Caulfield (The Catcher in the Rye) acceptable, but he remained neutral on the question of a change of attitudes. "This is the only character in any of the stories or books I have read that I could really identify with," he wrote. On the other hand, Tim made the general statement, "My attitudes, behavior, and general outlook on life have not been changed by my reading; on the contrary they have strengthened me in following my convictions." No student indicated that he had changed his attitudes or behavior as a result of the reading done this year.

The most significant element regarding the Reading Interest Inventory Tests is the indication of so little change in the reading tastes of the students as the charts demonstrate, Table II. Tim, Joe, Paul, and Alex retained their interests in plots involving social problems, and Pete's reading tastes remained eclectic. At present Dick is a Salinger fan but remains loyal to Edgar Allen Poe's tales and poetry. The field of romantic adventure remained Nick's preference. One of the boys, Tim, centered his choice of reading on historical themes.

The Sociometric Test was composed of three questions involving friendship, work, and stability relations. The sociograms chart the students' stated choices of classmates for seating arrangements, committee work, and protection. Figures 1, 2, and 3 respectively, reveal in graphic patterns the cliques, popularity groups, and the pairs in the classroom. For this study, the sociograms were used to provide an overview of the group structure of the class members. A study of the sociograms shows that the sample group was integrated.

Further study of the Sociometric Tests shows little significant effect on the reading preferences of these boys. The fact that five of the eight boys read one book recommended by the non-experimental students; one boy read two; and two of these six boys read books suggested by the sampling group indicates the weight of peer influence on their choice of reading.

The results of the Sociometric Tests indicate a diversified pattern of choices involving friendship, work, and stability relations which apparently has no relevancy to reading tastes. The friendship factor naturally affected the seating choices. In one case only did the choice remain stable--that of Paul and Pete's selection and Joe's selection of Nick. Paul and Pete, both underachievers, did not have the same reading tastes. Some bond of unity is

apparent since three choices of seating companions were made from the sampling group, but there was no indication of similarity in reading tastes.

Choices for committee work reveal Joe's choice of Nick on both tests, but the selection of Pete and Paul was mutual in the first test only; however, Dick was Paul's choice in the second test. Pete chose one of the non-experimental group. When Dick's seating, committee, and stability choice transferred at the end of the first semester, he chose a girl in the first two choices and made no choice in the stability test.

The Sociometric Tests acquainted the writer with the character and personality traits of all the seniors, but test results did not enter into the choice of reading material offered the sampling group, nor did their reading choices reflect the findings of the Sociometric Tests.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of the inquiry was to observe whether any identification with novel or short story characters was evident in adolescent boys and resulted in a change of attitude which would accomplish the development of well-adjusted adults. A review of the data to answer the problem dealing with change of attitudes of adolescents who identify themselves with characters portrayed in various types of novels and those who do not identify themselves with fictional personalities showed that reading had little significance that could be evaluated.

However that literature is potentially a powerful teacher is a fact that has been brought more emphatically to the attention of Americans in recent years, and as a result various methods and techniques have been introduced to exploit the potential of reading as a tool to a better understanding of self. The value of reading has assumed immense proportions, particularly the therapeutic approach.

Books do aid in adjustment. Because the results of reading are so intangible, they are apt to be less observable and less conducive to measurement than the results of more specific studies, as the present investigation has demonstrated to the writer. However, there have been many

declarations regarding the contributions of reading to character, personal development, and adjustment. While one may be able to predict with some confidence the impact that a certain story or novel will have on the reader, one can never predict the carryover on the behavior of the reader. Often there is an unawareness on the part of the reader that a specific book had contributed to his change of attitudes or to his strengthening of convictions already had.

Besides some insight into the complexity of man obtained through books, the use of literature can encourage the development of a more mature personality which will result in more effective living in this chaotic and confusing environment. Although there is little tangible evidence supporting the claim that reading does influence and change one's behavior, those who are involved in fostering the learning of others must continue to assume this is true--that the reading of good books positively influences the way one thinks, feels, and acts.

The Tables included in this study helped to verify the writer's thesis. Table I provides information relevant to the eight senior boys involved in the experimental study who were above the average intelligence. The student descriptions reached from the quiet, probing lad to the carefree, happy-go-lucky boy as well as from the defiant, influential one to the extremely skeptical, self-confident, and

ambitious adolescent. The findings of previous teachers as well as those of the writer have been incorporated into the character descriptions. Table II demonstrates that the Reading Interest Inventory Tests which were administered both before and after the experiment indicated little change in the attitudes of the students. The Sociometric Tests which included questions regarding work, friendship, and stability relations showed the degree of integration of the group.

The single-group experimental research on bibliotherapy continued from September through March. The Reading Interest Inventory Tests and the Sociometric Tests were the measuring devices used to evaluate the sample. During the experimental period the boys read novels and short stories. By means of written book reviews and discussions, the boys voiced the problems of the characters as related to modern-day teenage dilemmas. All were able to identify in some way. Most of them shared the hopes, frustrations, and problems of adjustment with characters in the stories read.

This study gives little encouragement to the writer to predict the practical influence of reading on the sample group. Some factors need consideration before even attempting a judgment. In particular, most of these boys did not read widely or ever find any type of reading enjoyable as the information charted in Chapter III shows. Also, until the time of the experiment little attempt was made to teach

them techniques of critical reading which would result in more meaningful reading.

That their reading has had some (direct or indirect) influence on the group, the boys themselves attest: Nick, for example asserted, "The characters (in the short stories read) were often comparable to my personality and way of thinking . . ., the moves and decisions that they made may someday be an influence on the way I may handle a similar situation." Noteworthy were other influential values discovered in the literature read, as the boys indicated in the written book reviews. Belief in God and spiritual values, the worth of friendship, the need for understanding and love for other human beings, the recognition of the brotherhood and dignity of man are values which were impressed on this group as a result of their reading.

Thus books may serve as a way in which teenagers may better understand themselves, their problems, and their world. The result of such understanding can mean a happier, peaceful, and more productive life. "Books are 'Tiny fragments of eternity, mutely ranged along an unadorned wall . . .' Yet when a hand frees you, when a heart touches you, you imperceptibly break through the workaday surroundings, and, as in a fiery chariot your words lead us up-ward from narrowness into eternity."[1]

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[1]Gray, op. cit., p. 490.

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APPENDIX

READING INTEREST INVENTORY TEST*

Name _____ Boy _____

Girl _____

1. Have you read any books lately for enjoyment?

   Yes ____ No ____

2. Name the books that you have read during the past year. Four will be sufficient. List in the order of recency.

   1. _____
   2. _____
   3. _____
   4. _____

3. How do you select the books you read? _____

   _____

4. Which of these was your favorite? _____

5. Why did you like this one in particular? _____

   _____

*This Test was adapted from the following sources:

1. Henry A. Bamman, Ursula Hogan, and Charles E. Greene, Reading Instruction in the Secondary Schools (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1961), pp. 259-260.

2. Gertrude S. Wright, "Some Reading Guidance Techniques," English Journal, LV (December, 1966), 1184.

6. If you had a choice, what type or types of books would you read? (From the list below mark three--1, 2, 3, in the order of your preference.)

___1. Biography	___ 6. Careers	___11. Technical
___2. Sports	___ 7. Animals	___12. Comics
___3. Poetry	___ 8. Science Fiction	___13. Religious
___4. Romance	___ 9. Historical	___14. Travel
___5. Mystery	___10. Classical Fiction	

7. How do you feel about reading? Enjoy it greatly? _____

Moderately so? _____ Do not like to read at all? _____

8. Would you give your reason for you answer to Number 7?

_____

9. Which book has been your all-time favorite? _____

_____

10. Why is this your choice? _____

_____

11. Which book have you disliked? _____

_____

12. Why did you dislike this one in particular? _____

_____

SOCIOMETRIC TEST

NAME _____ BOY _____

GIRL _____

QUESTION: Whom would you like to sit next to you?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

QUESTION: Whom would you like to work with on a committee?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

QUESTION: Whom would you like to be with in case of danger?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

BIBLIOTHERAPY AND ADOLESCENTS

by

SISTER MARY VIRGIL AUGUSTINE
B. A., Marymount College, 1961

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

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The purpose of the study was to aid adolescent boys by identifying with characters in various stories. The result of the identification was to develop attitudes which would help solve their problems. That there was no significant change in the attitudes of adolescents who identify themselves with characters portrayed in various types of novels and those who do not identify themselves with fictional personalities was the premise upon which the writer based the study.

A review of the research in bibliotherapy reveals the various methods and techniques that have been introduced to exploit the potential of reading as a tool to a better understanding of self. Reading like other human behavior is a function of the total personality. Because of the intangibility or lack of substantial evidence, the results of the reading experience do not lend themselves readily to accurate measurement. However, there are some testimonies supporting the contributions of reading to the development of character and maturity as evidenced by the Review of Literature. The realization that bibliotherapy has its limitations as well as its challenges encourages teachers to pursue the goal that reading can be an excellent means of aiding adolescents to achieve maturity by learning to recognize their own problems.

The sample used in the study were seventeen-year-old students with above average intelligence. The student descriptions reached from the quiet, probing lad to the carefree,

happy-go-lucky boy as well as from the defiant, influential one to the extremely skeptical, self-confident, and ambitious adolescent. The findings of previous teachers as well as those of the writer were incorporated into the character descriptions.

The single-group experimental research on bibliotherapy continued from September through March. The Reading Interest Inventory Tests and the Sociometric Tests were the measuring devices used to evaluate the sample. During the experimental period the boys read novels and short stories.

The Reading Interest Inventory Tests which were administered in a pre and post situation indicated little change in the attitudes of the students. The Sociometric Tests which included questions regarding work, friendship, and stability relations showed the degree of integration of the group.

By means of written book reviews and discussions, the boys voiced the problems of the characters as related to modern-day teenage dilemmas. All were able to identify in some way. Most of them shared the hopes, frustrations, and problems of adjustment with characters in the stories read. While there was little tangible evidence that their reading had some (direct or indirect) influence on the group was attested to by the boys themselves. Their reactions indicated that in general their attitudes were strengthened rather than changed.

One result of this study emphasized the claim that reading can foster the personal and social growth of the individual and as a consequence he becomes a mature, adequately adjusted, and socially responsible adult.